United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1388
7 May 1993

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Two weeks before elections in Cambodia, UNTAC is faced with increased violence which could have impact on voter turnout, Secretary-General says in new report.

- UNTAC compound attacked by armed men, leaving civilian police monitor dead, apparently of heart attack, and six personnel injured; NADK alleged to be responsible; UNTAC determined to hold 23 May elections.

- Security Council reaffirms that basis for peaceful solution to conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina is Vance/Owen peace plan; urges preparatory work for plan's implementation.

- UNHCR helps Bangladesh cope with 230,000 Muslim refugees from Myanmar; only 23,000 repatriated despite agreement last year.

- Second round of preparations for 1994 International Conference on Population and Development begins at Headquarters on Monday, 10 May.

- Preparatory Committee for 1995 Conference of Parties to Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons begins organizational session at Headquarters on Monday, 10 May.

- In Geneva, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights begins examination of reports by States parties.

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With elections in Cambodia two weeks away, the United Nations Transitional Authority in that country (UNTAC) is faced with increased violence which could have an impact on the voter turnout, Secretary-General said in a new report to the Security Council, dated 3 May. However, UNTAC must continue to carry out its mandate as well as it can, he writes.

The last 13 months have been a "sobering experience" for the United Nations as previous expectations had been overly optimistic, he said. The

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election would clearly not be taking place in an environment as disarmed and politically neutral as was envisaged in the Paris Agreements. The Secretary-General warned however that not to proceed would mean ceding to unacceptable threats and giving the right to veto over the peace process "to an armed group that has rejected its commitment under the Agreement".

The responsibility for Cambodia's future rested on the shoulders of the Cambodian people and parties, which are members of the Supreme National Council, as well as the parties taking part in the elections, the report said.

The Secretary-General intends to submit a further report to the Security Council on Cambodia after the election, which will contain his recommendations on UNTAC's post-electoral activities in the country. Pending that report, Mr. Boutros-Ghali has proposed that UNTAC's Military and Civilian Police Components be maintained at the present level.

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The Headquarters of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in Thpong district were attacked this morning by armed men, leaving a civilian police monitor from the Philippines dead, apparently of a heart attack, according to an UNTAC spokesman. A Civilian Police monitor from Colombia, four Bulgarian peacekeepers and a Cambodian guard were injured during the attack.

The spokesman recalled that the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) had killed three Bulgarian peacekeepers in the same district on 2 April. It had been alleged that the NADK had carried out the latest attack, but that would have to be confirmed by UNTAC investigators, he said. The NADK had been responsible for killing a Colombian Civilian Police monitor on 30 April; however, it appears that UNTAC had not been the intended target.

Behrooz Sadry, the Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Cambodia, deplored the latest attack and other acts of violence in the last week, saying they were not only directed against UNTAC and the local population, but at the electoral process in Cambodia.

Violence would not deter UNTAC from holding the elections on 23 May, the spokesman stressed. He noted that the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, at a meeting yesterday in Beijing, had condemned the violence and reiterated its full commitment to the peace process and to the elections.

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The basis for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the Vance/Owen peace plan which the Bosnian Serbs must return to, Security Council President Yuliy M. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) said this afternoon. He made the statement to the press after consultations of the Council on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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Council members have also expressed their conviction that preparatory work for implementation of the plan by the Secretary-General and others should continue actively in the interim, President Vorontsov said.

Meanwhile, Lord Owen, Co-Chairman of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, is expected to brief the European Community Council of Ministers in Brussels on Monday, 10 May, according to a United Nations spokesman. The following day, he would travel to New York to join Cyrus Vance, the outgoing Co-Chairman, for the next round of talks between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Mr. Vance has agreed to stay on until the negotiations on this matter are concluded. The new Co-Chairman is Thorvald Stoltenberg.

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Some 230,000 Muslim refugees from Myanmar are still living in camps in Bangladesh despite an agreement in April 1992 between the two countries for their safe and voluntary repatriation, according to a United Nations spokesman today. Only about 23,000 had been repatriated in the last year.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was assisting Bangladesh in determining whether the refugees wish to return home voluntarily, he said. United Nations High Commissioner Sadoka Ogata would visit Dacca in mid-May to discuss a new memorandum of understanding regarding UNHCR cooperation on the matter.

A representative of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs would travel to Myanmar to discuss the United Nations role in the return of the refugees.

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The second round of preparations for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development will begin at Headquarters on Monday, 10 May. The Committee charged with preparing for the gathering is expected to decide on the final document to be adopted at the Conference, which will be held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September, 1994.

The Committee, which ends its session on 21 May, will also consider recommendations on population growth, distribution and migration, the environment and development, women's issues, and health.

The overall theme of the 1994 Conference, as defined by the Economic and Social Council, will be population, economic growth and sustainable development.

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The Preparatory Committee for the 1995 Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will begin its four-day organizational session at Headquarters on Monday, 10 May.

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Under the Treaty, which entered into force in 1970, States parties must not transfer nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices to any recipient, or help or encourage non-nuclear-weapon States to manufacture or acquire them. Non-nuclear-weapon States undertake to conclude safeguard agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to prevent the diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons.

Parties also undertake to pursue negotiations to end the nuclear arms race and to bring about nuclear disarmament.

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The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights will examine how States Parties to the International Covenant on those rights meet their obligations when it begins its eighth session in Geneva on Monday, 10 May.

The Committee will study reports from Nicaragua, Ukraine, Iceland, Uruguay, Canada, Iran, Germany, Viet Nam and Australia on measures taken and progress made in implementing the Covenant. During its session, which ends on 20 May, the Committee will also review information from Belgium, Kenya, Lebanon and Suriname, which have not submitted reports.

The Committee was established by the Economic and Social Council in 1985 and helps it fulfill its supervisory functions relating to the International Covenant. The Covenant was adopted by the General Assembly in 1966 and entered into force in 1976.

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